

## Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7518

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 3598

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, BG

SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI

REF: STATE 166499

1. THE AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SPELLS HIS NAME QUOTE M.R. SIDDIQI END QUOTE. NOTE THAT HE DOES NOT PERSONALLY USE THE MORE COMMON RENDERING OF HIS NAME, SIDDIQUI, NOR DOES HE USE HIS FULL FIRST AND MIDDLE NAME.
2. VIEWS ON BANGLADESH-U.S. RELATIONS. ALTHOUGH SIDDIQI SELDOM DISCUSSES US-BANGLADESH RELATIONS AS SUCH, HE APPEARS TO BE VERY WELL DISPOSED TOWARD THE UNITED STATES AND HAS ALWAYS BEEN FRIENDLY TO EMBASSY OFFICERS, PARTICULARLY TOWARD THE AMBASSADOR SINCE HIS ARRIVAL LAST YEAR. SIDDIQI'S COMMENTS ON POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MATTERS INDICATE A STRONG ADVOCACY OF THE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM IN BANGLADESH; HE HAS BEEN REMARKABLY FRANK IN EXPRESSING TO US HIS MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE POLITICAL TREND IN BANGLADESH AND THE INADEQUACY OF THE INCENTIVES FOR PRIVATE INVESTMENT. (SEE ESPECIALLY SIDDIQI/BOSTER MEMCON OF APRIL 25, 1975)
3. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE. SIDDIQI IS WELL REGARDED PROFESSIONALLY AND HAS LONG HAD A REPUTATION AS A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN. HOWEVER, HE HAS NOT DEVOTED HIMSELF SOLELY TO HIS BUSINESS AFFAIRS AND HAS OFTEN LEFT MANAGERIAL CONCERNS TO OTHERS. A CONSIDERABLE

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PART OF HIS TIME HAS BEEN SPENT ON THE SOCIAL WORK OF

THE LIONS CLUB, AN ORGANIZATION HE HAS ENTHUSIASTICALLY AND CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED FOR MANY YEARS. MOREOVER, SINCE 1964, SIDDIQI AS AN AWAMI LEAGUE LEADER IN CHITTAGONG, WAS MOST ACTIVE IN PARTY AFFAIRS. AS COMMERCE MINISTER IN MUJIB'S FIRST CABINET, SIDDIQI WAS ONE OF THE FEW WHO HAD A REPUTATION FOR COMPETENCE. HOWEVER, HE DEPARTED THE MINISTRY UNDER SOMETHING OF A CLOUD. IN THE VIEW OF SOME, HE WAS REPLACED BECAUSE OF HIS MINISTRY'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE DOUBLE PAYMENT FOR GOODS WHICH HAD BEEN PURCHASED BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. SUPPORTERS OF SIDDIQI SAY HE WAS REPLACED BECAUSE HE OPPOSED THE NATIONALIZATION POLICY.

4. PERSONALITY. SIDDIQI IS AN INTELLIGENT, URBANE, LOW-KEY, RATHER GENTLE MAN WITH WIDE CULTURAL INTERESTS. HE DOES NOT GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF FORCEFULNESS, AND ONE HIGH RANKING MFA OFFICIAL HAS SUGGESTED THAT SIDDIQI MAY BE "TOO QUIET, TOO GENTLE" FOR THE AMBASSADORSHIP. HOWEVER, WHILE SIDDIQI MAY BE MORE DIFFIDENT AND LESS ACTIVE THAN THE INCUMBENT AMBASSADOR, HE IS LIKELY TO BE MORE SOPHISTICATED, MORE SELECTIVE AND ACUTE IN HIS APPROACHES. HE IS ALSO WIDELY BELIEVED IN DACCA TO HAVE EXCELLENT CONTACTS IN WASHINGTON.

5. SIDDIQI HAS DEMONSTRATED CONSIDERABLE INDEPENDENCE OF MIND AT TIMES. FOR INSTANCE IN 1973 WHEN SPECIAL ENVOY FOR MUJIB IN BRUSSELS, HE REPORTEDLY SHOWED CONSIDERABLE FLEXIBILITY IN BDG'S POSITION ON SUB-CONTINENTAL ISSUES. THIS FLEXIBILITY WAS SOON DISCLAIMED BY THE BDG CHARGE WHO TOLD THE BELGIANS THAT SIDDIQI HAD NOT FOLLOWED HIS INSTRUCTIONS (SEE ROME 4124 OF MAY 19, 1973). ALSO, ALTHOUGH HE HAS BEEN TAPPED FOR SOME TIME FOR THE AMBASSADORSHIP AND THUS WOULD BE A MAJOR REPRESENTATIVE OF BDG, SIDDIQI HAS BEEN EXTREMELY OPEN IN EXPRESSING TO US HIS MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN BANGLADESH. SIDDIQI IS CLOSE TO SHEIKH MUJIB BUT THE RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN STRAINED SOMEWHAT SINCE SIDDIQI LEFT THE CABINET IN 1973. NEVERTHELESS, SIDDIQI IS FREQUENTLY IN MUJIB'S COMPANY, AND WAS PART OF THE IMMEDIATE

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ENTOURAGE THAT ACCOMPANIED THE PRESIDENT ON THE BARNSTORMING TOUR OF CHITTAGONG IN CONNECTION WITH THE OPENING OF THE BETBUNIA SATELLITE STATION.

6. FAMILY. SIDDIQI COMES FROM A MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY OF GOOD STANDING IN CHITTAGONG DISTRICT. HE IS MARRIED TO KOHINOOR, THE ELDEST DAUGHTER OF A.K. KHAN, CHITTAGONG BUSINESSMAN AND INDUSTRIALIST, AND FORMER MINISTER IN

AYUB KHAN'S CABINET. MRSYV KOHINOOR SIDDIQI IS AN ATTRACTIVE EDUCATED WOMAN WHOSE INTERESTS CENTER ON HER FAMILY. THE SIDDIQIS HAVE FIVE SONS RANGING IN AGE FROM ABOUT ONE YEAR OLD TO 18 YEARS OLD. THE ELDEST SON IS NOW STUDYING IN THE UK.

7. THERE ARE NO PHOTOGRAPHS AVAILABLE OF THE SIDDIQI FAMILY.  
BOSTER

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